

**Statement of
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**Before the
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands
House Natural Resources Committee
U.S. House of Representatives**

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H.R. 1853

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to provide the Department of Agriculture's views on H.R. 1853, a bill to clarify Federal jurisdiction with respect to the C.C. Cragin Project.

The C.C. Cragin Project consists of a dam, reservoir, and a number of facilities, including a diversion tunnel and pump shaft, pumping plant, priming reservoir, pipeline, electrical transmission line, and a generating plant. Most of the project is located in the Coconino and Tonto National Forests in north-central Arizona on a parcel of land encompassing approximately 512 acres and containing (1) approximately 300 feet of the crest of the Cragin Dam and associated spillway; (2) a reservoir pool of the Cragin Dam of approximately 250 acres, as defined by the high water mark; and (3) a linear corridor of approximately 262 acres.

H.R. 1853 seeks to address Federal jurisdiction with respect to the C.C. Cragin project by transferring jurisdiction over the Federal land underlying the dam, reservoir, and linear corridor from the US Forest Service to the Bureau of Reclamation.

As the Administration testified on S. 1080, the Administration appreciates the interest of the Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District (SRP) to reach prompt resolution of the management responsibilities of the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior. The goals of the two federal agencies involved in managing this land, the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior, are twofold. First, we aim to clarify the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation's management responsibility for the lands underlying the dam and reservoir, acknowledging SRP's right to operate and maintain the dam, reservoir, and utility corridor pursuant to the Arizona Water Settlement Act (AWSA, Public Law 108-451) and the 1917 agreement between the Department of the Interior and SRP. Second, we must meet the needs of the Forest Service by allowing the agency to manage the lands underlying the utility corridor for recreation, wildfire, law enforcement, and other activities consistent with the Forest Service's authorities and responsibilities, the AWSA, the 1917 agreement, and the existing right-of-way over the corridor held by another party. In particular, this approach would allow for integrated management of tens of thousands of acres of ecosystems across National Forest System lands underlying and adjacent to the Cragin project, including watershed, wildlife habitat, range, and vegetation management.

The Administration recognizes that this legislation is intended to hasten the development of a workable management agreement. However, the Department has concerns with H.R. 1853 as it could complicate Forest Service management of the use and occupancy of National Forest System lands. While this particular legislation may work for this specific situation, it potentially sets a precedent for managing other utility corridors that could negatively impact land management activities. We also have been in discussions with staff from the Bureau of Reclamation as well as key stakeholders about potential non-legislative solutions to resolve these

difficult management issues. We will continue to engage in dialogue with these interested parties.

We understand this Committee is considering making amendments to H.R. 1853 so that it would be similar to S. 1080 as reported. Though S. 1080 as reported has some of the same issues as H.R. 1853, it would be less problematic for the Forest Service and we do not oppose it. We would like to continue to work with the Bureau of Reclamation and the Committee on the remaining technical clarifications that involve mapping, emergency activities, and access as well as other legislative options for achieving the same objectives. Thank you for your consideration.